

# Are You Called to be an Edmund Rice Christian Brother?

**How do I figure out what God has planned for me?"**



Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America  
PRESENCE COMPASSION LIBERATION



Greetings,

Often I am asked, "How do I figure out what God has planned for me?"

Volumes could be written in response to that seemingly simple question and still the answer would be incomplete.

Figuring out what God plans for us is a life-long faith journey.

First, trust in God. God may be telling you your next step, but are you listening? Even more importantly, are you willing to take that next step?

God speaks to us in many ways. Look around; see all that God has done for you. God has led you to this time and this place. Hear the thoughts God has placed in your heart.

These seem simple, but truly opening your heart, mind and soul to God is far from an easy task.

Since you are reading this you are figuring out what God has planned for you – discerning the next step on your faith journey.

The purpose of this program is to provide you with one structured way to listen for God.

This publication contains a passage from Scripture and a question (see page 4): "In what ways have you struggled to follow how Christ is calling you to follow after Him?"

Read the Scriptural passage. Pray. Then write a one page essay in response to the question asked. If you wish you can also e-mail it to me.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide you during your time of discernment. I will keep you in my prayers.

God bless you,



Brother James McDonald, C.F.C

Vocation Promoter  
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***Look at the birds of the air,  
that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns,  
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.  
Are you not worth much more than they?***

Matthew 6:26

We all want to be happy.

At the end of our lives, we all have a hope that we have made a contribution to the betterment of the human race.



As we grow, we are often asked “What do you want to do when you grow up?” As children, the answer is often, “I want to be a firefighter or a cop, or a doctor.” These early impressions are often filled with an idealistic impression and a hope to be a hero and save the world.

As you reach high school and start to look at working or college, that idealism starts to be replaced by a realism of finding a job, college costs, admission tests, and your ability to find success in your chosen career field.



The question that we are asked, however, is often reversed from what it should be.

If we truly want to be happy, instead of asking the question: “What do *I* want to do?” the question should be: **“What does *God* want me to do?”** If God has created each one of us uniquely while we were still in our mother’s womb, He knows better than we do how we are designed and what will lead us to true happiness.



This guide contains the first of several stories we will send to you. In each story there is a tension between what the main character desires to do versus what God desires them to do. When they follow their own designs, they are met with frustrations and difficulties. When they follow where God is leading, they are met with success and peace.

For each story read the passage from Scripture and write a one page essay in response to the question asked and e-mail it to me: [bromaccfc@yahoo.com](mailto:bromaccfc@yahoo.com)



# In what ways have you struggled to follow how Christ is calling you to follow after Him?

## Jonah 1:1-10 The Story of Jonah

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.”

But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them.

But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep.

So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god. Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.”

Each man said to his mate, “Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us.”

So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

Then they said to him, “Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

He said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land.”

Then the men became extremely frightened and they said to him, “How could you do this?” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

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**Please write a one page essay in response to the question asked, and if you want you can also e-mail you esasy to me: [bromaccfc@yahoo.com](mailto:bromaccfc@yahoo.com)**



## Prayer to Know One's Vocation

Lord, my God and my loving Father  
You have made me to know You, to love You, to serve You,  
And thereby to find and fulfill myself.

I know that You are in all things,  
And that every path can lead me to You  
But of them all, there is one especially  
By which You want me to come to You.

Since I will do what You want of me,  
I pray You, send Your Holy Spirit to me: into my mind,  
To show me what You want of me; into my heart,  
To give me the determination to do it,  
And to do it with all my love, with all my mind,

And with all my strength right to the end.  
Amen.



# Vocation Glossary

**Consecrated Religious Brother:** A member of a men's religious order who is not a priest, but engages in the work of the order. Members typically take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

**Discernment:** The process of coming to know God's will via prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By contacting us and reading this material you are undergoing the discernment process.

**Formation:** Once you have discerned that you are called to be a Brother, the Formation program guides you through a series of steps toward becoming a Brother.

**Novice:** A person who has been accepted into a religious order and who is undergoing a period of training and formation before taking vows.

**Novitiate:** The period a novice spends in training, for the Edmund Rice Christian Brother this is one year.

**Profession:** The taking of vows upon joining a religious order.

**Vocation:** The calling we have in this life. God has created us to love and serve Him, and He has a unique plan for each person's life -- a vocation. As God is the source of all lasting happiness, satisfaction and joy, then living according to God's plan for us will be the best life we can lead. Courage, obedience and persistent prayer are needed for us to live our vocation, whether it is to single life, to marriage or in service to the Church as a priest or religious.

**Vow:** An act of devotion in which persons dedicate themselves to God or promise God some good work. It is a deliberate and free promise made to God concerning a possible and better good which must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion. Religious order vows are to chastity, obedience and poverty.



# Are any of these your questions? Here is your opportunity to ask them!

## **General Questions**

What are the good and bad sides of being a Brother?  
What are the differences between a priest and a Brother?  
Do all religious get to meet the Pope or go to the Vatican?  
What were religious like when they were in high school?  
What's the difference between the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers and other Brothers?  
What would the Brothers do if they weren't Brothers?  
Why can't priests/religious marry?

## **Becoming a Christian Brother**

What influences someone to become a Brother?  
What events in your life made you realize you were called to be a Brother?  
Why does someone choose a religious lifestyle?  
What are the requirements for becoming a Brother?  
How long does it take to become a Brother?  
Would you be allowed to be a religious if you had been in a sexual relationship?  
Does being a Brother mean it is a lifetime commitment?  
How old are most people when they first think about being a Brother?  
How do family and friends react to the decision to be a Brother?

## **Life as a Christian Brother**

What sort of house do Brothers live in?  
Who does the cooking and looks after the house?  
What are living conditions like?  
What rules or guidelines does a Brother's life have that are different from our lives?  
Do Brothers get paid?  
Can Brothers spend money they get on something for themselves?  
Do people act differently when they know you are a Brother?  
How often do Brothers pray?

## **Faith, Prayer and the Vows**

Do Brothers find a sense of spiritual freedom in their prayers?  
How do Brothers pray or bring themselves closer to God?  
Do Brothers ever question whether God really exists?  
What do Brothers do if they ever feel like they are struggling in following God?  
Do Brothers ever get lonely?  
How do Brothers deal with sexual desires?  
What is it like for Brothers knowing that they will never marry?

## **Other Issues**

Is it enjoyable being a Brother? Why?  
What do Brothers do in their free time?  
Do Brothers ever get a day off?  
Does the life of a Brother ever get boring?  
Do Brothers get to choose where they get to live?  
What's the hardest thing about being a Brother?  
Do Brothers ever fight with other Brothers?  
What obstacles in life do Brothers face?  
Did a Brother ever wish to change his decision about becoming a Brother?

**You can e-mail your questions to me: [bromaccfc@yahoo.com](mailto:bromaccfc@yahoo.com)  
Or call me: 815.272.7742**

*Each Brother is an open letter from Christ –  
a message written, not with ink  
but in the Spirit of the living God,  
with a faithful human heart to carry it!*

Blessed Edmund Rice, Founder of the Christian Brothers

## Christian Brothers Serve God



Brothers continue a century-plus record of academic excellence at dozens of elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges across North America.

Brothers are involved in Youth Ministry projects enabling young people to minister to their peers and to gain a better sense of their own calling to be Christian.

Brothers from North America conduct missionary work around the world.



Brothers' education services for adults range from spirituality classes, to workshops for teachers, to English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

Brothers provide their talents and skills to assist parish and diocesan ministries.



Brothers provide material support to and teach migrant farm workers.

Brothers minister at hospitals, including ministering to AIDS patients.

Brothers conduct ministries to homeless people and offer services to refugees.





# Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America



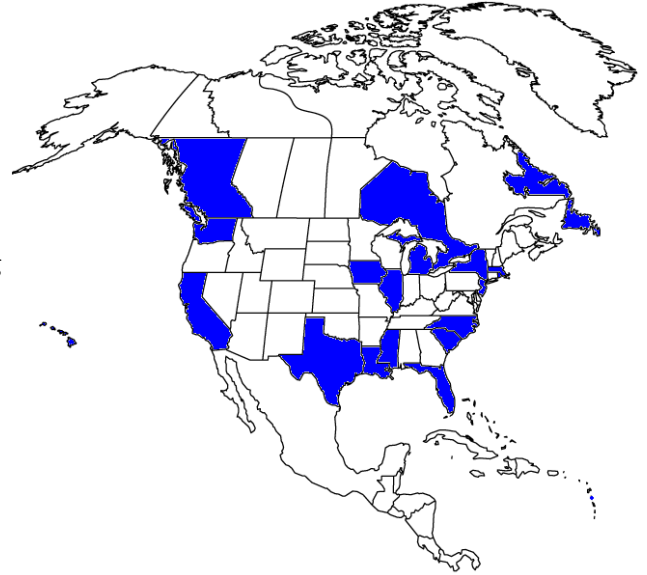
Edmund Rice (1762-1844) founded the Congregation of Christian Brothers in 1802 in Waterford, Ireland in order to provide quality, Catholic education to the materially poor. Edmund heard God's call in the uneducated, marginalized young boys of Ireland and began to establish Catholic schools, although such institutions were illegal at the time. He took in those boys everyone else had given up on and it did not take long for him to realize that he must attend to all the needs of the boys — food, clothing, and housing.

The first request that Christian Brothers come to the United States was made in October 1828 by the Archbishop of Baltimore, Maryland.

Unfortunately, it had to be declined as there were not enough Brothers at the time to meet the need.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Congregation's membership had grown steadily and the Brothers' work was moving on to other countries around the world. In 1876 the first Brothers arrived in Canada and founded their first site in Newfoundland. Thirty years later, in 1906, about two dozen Brothers were ministering in three Canadian communities. In that same year the Brothers' first permanent ministry was established in the United States, in New York City.

During the twentieth century, the Congregation expanded enough throughout Canada and the United States to open schools and ministries in many cities and towns. Today, some 175 Brothers serve in a wide variety of ways, according to the needs of their communities, their neighbors, and their own individual gifts.



The Brothers' North American Province encompasses, Canada, the United States and the West Indies. The map indicates Brothers' ministry/community locations.

All of the Brothers' efforts have been in response to the urgings of the Spirit. Edmund's vision was to see God in the marginalized and the poor and to enable those without a voice to be heard. The challenge for the future is to have our hearts transformed through a shared reflection on these experiences in the light of the Gospel.



## **What's Next?**

E-mail me your essay on the Bible passage.

Call, text, or e-mail me anytime:

815.272.7742

[bromaccfc@yahoo.com](mailto:bromaccfc@yahoo.com)

I would be happy to answer your questions,  
talk with you,  
learn more about you,  
and help you learn more about the  
Edmund Rice Christian Brothers

**Br. Jim McDonald, CFC**



**Being a Brother is a rich and fulfilling way to live.**